3: Roberts S-4 (no date)1951 EDl Rumania EDl

for this it required a degree of stability, not the hectic atmosphere created by Guardist terror squads. Consequently, when Antonescu in December began to take measures to bring the Guard to heel, he had German support, although the Legionaries refused to believe that the Germans would desert their most ardent allies. Antonescu proceeded to disarm their formations and to strengthen the army. Seeing their position undermined, the Guard on January 21, 1941, attempted to revolt. They were suppressed by the army after three days of savage fighting in which they outdid themselves in committing bestial atrocities. On January 27 Antonescu formed a new cabinet composed almost entirely of military officers. The Iron Guard was dissolved, the Legionary state abolished, and a firm military dictatorship under the *Conducator* came into being. Thus fell one of the first fascist movements in Europe and, ironically enough, at just the time Nazi Germany achieved complete predominance in Rumania.

Under the Antonescu dictatorship political life ceased altogether; the army and the Germans were in complete control. A couple of plebiscites provided the necessary stamp of legality and the government, with very few changes, remained in power for the next three years. In June, 1941, Antonescu joined Hitler in the war against the Soviet Union. Maniu and Constantin Brătianu supported the war until the recovery of Bessarabia and Bucovina, though they protested against the dictatorship. After Rumanian troops crossed the Dniester, they dispatched notes of protest to Antonescu demanding Rumania's withdrawal from the war. But by this time he was too deeply involved in the German adventure. In October, 1941, he annexed Transnistria, that part of the Ukraine lying between the Dniester and Bug rivers and including Odessa. Rumanian troops went on and on until they reached Stalingrad. Then began the slow retreat.

Well before his overthrow Antonescu, now a Marshal, realized that the war was lost but was unwilling to take the steps to extricate Rumania, although he permitted envoys of the political parties to establish contact with the Allies. In the absence of effective opposition he was able to maintain power until the Russians, who had been checked in northern Moldavia in the spring of 1944, resumed their offensive in the late summer. With the imminent threat of Rumania becoming a battlefield and being further devastated by increasing American bombing raids, King Michael seized the initiative, arrested him, and sought an armistice.

3: Roberts S-4 (no date)1951 EDI Rumania EDI

page 242

XII

THE COMMUNIST PERIOD: THE ADVENT TO POWER, 1944–45

669 ON August 23, 1944, King Michael, with the cooperation of a four-party bloc comprising the National Peasants, the Liberals, the Socialists, and the Communists overthrew Marshal Antonescu through a skillful palace coup d'état. On September 12 Rumania signed an armistice with the Allies. Six months later, on March 6, 1945, the Groza government, nominally a coalition but dominated by the Communist party, came into office and has remained in power since that date.

668 The sudden flowering of the Rumanian Communist party, the result of external rather than internal influences, marks a definite break in the continuity of Rumanian politics. Communism was not totally lacking a past in Rumania, and the Communist program had a relevance to Rumanian problems, but without the direct and active intervention of the Soviet Union the Groza government would not have obtained office. To be sure, the Conservative Marghiloman cabinet of 1918 was the direct consequence of Germany's military successes on the Eastern Front; the return of Brătianu in the same year was made possible by the Allied victory. The fall of Vintilă Brătianu and the success of the National Peasants in 1928 were to some extent connected with Rumania's foreign financial relations. Above all, Carol's fall and the Iron Guard and Antonescu dictatorships were certainly conditioned by the Nazi hegemony over southeastern Europe. Rumania has always been affected in its internal politics by direct or indirect foreign influences. Nevertheless, there is a difference.

All the preceding political changes hitherto considered were effected by parties or groups, which, if they were not popular, were at least associated with important Rumanian institutions. Thus the Liberals, the extent of whose popular support was doubtful, formed the oldest party in Rumania and were in control of the nation's banking and financial apparatus. Carol made use of the institution of the monarchy and its tradition of royal paternalism. Antonescu relied upon the army. The National Peasants, less well connected with the institutional framework, one of their weaknesses, were, in their period of growth, the representatives of a broad mass movement in the peas-

12: Kormos S-4, 5 (no date) 1944
ED1 Rumania ED1

duced a radical land reform and legislation for the provision of general public instruction. Cuza's reforms were only partly put into practice when a palace revolution, engineered by some of the *boiars*, and by army officers, deposed him and forced him into exile.

CAROL I.[1] The unificaiton of the two principalities was now achieved. It had been accomplished from above, by the same class, greatly strengthened by Rumanized Greeks and others, who for the past centuries had served foreign rulers and exploited the peasantry. It was based on the very real and strong desire of the whole people to live in a State of its own, but the achievement of this aim was completed as a result of international diplomacy and intrigues at home, not by a genuine national revolution.

The rule of Carol I was the period of the consolidation of the new State. He introduced a constitution based on the Belgian model and after fighting the Russo-Turkish War on Russia's side was recognized by the Powers as the first King of Rumania.

During his reign there was considerable progress in economic life assisted by great investments of foreign capital which enriched many landowners, a number of Rumanian capitalists and the corrupt bureaucracy, who together became organized in the Conservative and Liberal Parties: they ruled Rumania between them. In achieving nominal independence Rumania did not succeed in ridding itself of the old social system, resting on the pre-

[1] Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, Prince of Rumania 1866, King 1881.
[i.e. King Carol I (1881-1914) -- Analyst]

12: Kormos S-4, 5 (no date) 1944
ED1 Rumania ED1

175 dominance of a small, wealthy and powerful land-
669 owning class. The situation led in 1907 to one of the
585 bloodiest peasant revolutions of modern times which was put down brutally by General Averescu. Significantly the peasant rising began with pogroms against the Jews who had become very unpopular as the agents of the landowners: it has often been found profitable in Rumania to divert discontent into anti-Semitic channels.

175 In 1913 Rumania joined in the Second Balkan War against Bulgaria and thereby gained the whole of the Dobrudja. During the period preceding the outbreak of the last Great War Rumania became an ally of the Central Powers through a secret Alliance made by King Carol I with Austria-Hungary and Germany in 1883. After the death of Carol and the accession of Ferdinand in 1914 the Rumanian Government remained neutral, until it entered the Great War on the side of the Allies on 27 August 1916.

GREATER RUMANIA. This decision was taken owing to the territorial gains which Russia and the Western Powers offered as an inducement and which were embodied in another Secret Treaty signed on 17 August, and also to the pro-French feeling of the ruling class. As a result, though swiftly defeated and overrun by the Germans and Bulgarians, Rumania was able, after the war, to satisfy her territorial claims against Hungary and Austria, and the weakness of Soviet Russia enabled her to annex Bessarabia. Thanks, therefore, to her Allies, Rumania emerged from the Peace Settlement doubled in area and in population.

[Bessarabia]

On 8 April 1918 the Representative Council of Bessarabia,[1] *Sfatul Tari*, by 86 votes to 3, 36 delegates abstaining, decided to become an autonomous part of Rumania. This step was sanctioned by Germany when the Treaty of Bucarest was signed one month later. In November of the same year, 1918, after the Armistice, it was decided at a session of the Representative Council, attended by only 46 delegates, to declare for the unconditional union of Bessarabia with Rumania. The annexation of Bessarabia was not recognized by the Peace Conference at Paris; and although recognition was promised by the Conference of Ambassadors in 1920, this undertaking was never ratified by all the Powers.

During the following years Bessarabia was treated as a conquered province. All district councils and other organs of local government were abolished. The country was ruled by prefects appointed by and responsible to the central government in Bucarest. The province was strongly garrisoned and lived in a continuous state of siege. All communications over the Dniester were destroyed and anybody caught attempting to cross the frontier was either imprisoned or shot. Between 1918 and 1924 there were a hundred and thirty-five uprisings in Bessarabia, which were suppressed by the military with the utmost violence. In the course of these revolts it is estimated that over thirty thousand Bessarabians were killed, many more executed or sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. The peasant revolt of 1924 in the region around the town of Tatar-Bunar was put down after heavy fighting and the burning of many villages.

[1] The Council was composed of 138 deputies of whom 103 were Rumanian, 13 Ukrainian, 7 Russian, 6 Jewish, 5 Bulgarian, 1 Pole and 1 Armenian.

12: Kormos S-4, 5 (no date) 1944
ED1 Rumania ED1

This state of affairs led to the great and bloody peasant revolt of 1907 which was ruthlessly crushed by the Bratianu government with the help of troops commanded by General Averescu. Yet, even after this the rulers of Rumania were unwilling to carry out reforms which were already overdue. Only in 1917, when the position on the Rumanian front seemed completely hopeless and when the Russian Revolution found more and more adherents among the peasant soldiers, did the government of King Ferdinand decide to carry out a thorough land reform. Although this was the most far-reaching of any measures ever carried out in Rumania, it bore all the marks of a step adopted unwillingly, under the pressure of external events. Although the Bratianu government, composed of many big landowners, consented to carry out the land reform, it was violently opposed by many of the government's supporters. The reforms, as finally applied in the early nineteen-twenties in both the Old Kingdom and in the New Territories, differed considerably from the original plans of 1917. They did, however, bring about important changes. Whereas before the Great War half of all the arable land belonged to a few *boiars*, by 1930 about nine-tenths belonged to small holders and only one-tenth to big landowners.

In Bessarabia many of the big estates remained untouched; land was given to reliable farmers, Germans and Rumanian colonists, but not to the landless who needed it most. In Transylvania the land reform was used to strengthen the Rumanian as against the Magyar elements of the population. But many of the holdings remained too small to

12: Kormos S-4, 5 (no date) 1944
ED1 Rumania ED1

up of Jews became the favourite occupation of the legionaries. The resulting confusion helped many minor officials as well as influential business men in acquiring valuable property.

But it soon became obvious that the real masters of Rumania were the Germans. In October 1940 Antonescu invited German troops into the country as instructors for the Rumanian Army. German trade delegations began organizing Rumania's economy and German specialists were appointed to important positions in various ministries. Although Antonescu had included the Iron Guard in his government, the struggle for power between him and Horia Sima continued. In January 1941 the Iron Guard, supporting the latter, made a last bid. The legionaries rose in revolt and succeeded in gaining several strong positions in Bucarest and in some provincial towns. The army, however, sided with Antonescu, who was also aided by the Germans, and within a short time the 'Conducator' emerged as victor. He at once proceeded to the establishment of a completely military administration and based his whole regime on the army.

His success in the fight against the Iron Guard was influenced decisively by the German desire to create a stable Rumanian government which would join in the attack on the Soviet Union. Antonescu did not fail his German masters. On 22 June 1941 Rumanian troops, together with German divisions, crossed the Soviet frontier. Thanks to German support, Bessarabia and the Northern Bukovina were re-occupied within a short time. Both provinces were put under a military administration and ruled quite separately from the rest of Rumania.

12: Kormos S-4, 5 (no date) 1944
ED1 Rumania ED1

181 shown that they possess qualities equal to those of other nations, and they still do. These forces are dormant, covered, as it were, by a thick skin which has grown as a result of blows which had to be suffered and could not be parried. If and when the strain becomes too great, and when opportunity comes, then this people may discover its power and, if it be well led, form a healthy State.

669 186 Up to now this[1] has never happened: the people has never won against its oppressors. And this is a factor which has been ever present in Rumanian history. The peasant revolt which broke out amongst the Rumanians in Transylvania in 1785, four years before the French Revolution, ended in complete defeat. The national movement of Tudor Vladimirescu in 1820 resulted in little more than the appointment of Rumanian, instead of Greek, princes to the thrones of Moldavia and Wallachia. The revolutions of 1848 were speedily crushed by the combined forces of the great empires and, in the case of the Rumanians of Transylvania, were used in the most cunning way to defeat the national movement of another people. The union of Wallachia and Moldavia, one of the most genuine aims of the whole Rumanian people, was achieved in the end less by popular forces than by intrigues and international diplomacy. The Great Peasant Revolt of 1907 was put down by the military and cost thousands of peasants' lives. The Land Reforms of 1917 were accepted by a parliament which contained not one single peasant; and they were carried out by one of the richest landowners of Rumania, who, with his associates, had certainly no intention of applying them in such a way as to diminish the power of his

[1] [i.e: the formation of a healthy State -- Analyst]

12: Kormos S-4, 5 (no date) 1944
ED1 Rumania ED1

class over the countryside. The union of all Rumanians in one State was a long-cherished dream. Its realization was only partly due to the actions of the people; Greater Rumania was the result of the greediness of the country's rulers, supported by the anti-Soviet policy of many countries. It carried the seed of its own destruction; and, when disruption came and the popular forces rose to assert their will in 1940, they were again defeated. In place of the royal dictatorship came the dictatorship of Rumanian and German Fascism: in place of partial economic domination by the west came complete domination by Germany.

One of the greatest barriers to the progress and well-being of Rumania and the Rumanians has been the fact that the geographical position and the wealth of the country have made it the victim of the ambitions of Great Powers. Rumanian governments have sided more often than not with the national enemies of their people and have at best tried to play off one of their foreign protectors against the other.

Yet it is exactly the geographical position and the great wealth of Rumania, combined with the hardiness and strength of its inhabitants, which hold out the promise of a happier future. The material and human resources for such a development are abundant. What is necessary is the liberation of these material and human forces under disinterested leadership. If that happens, if the unlucky chain of unsuccessful revolutions is broken; if these forces conquer those of their corrupt rulers, and the unhealthy social system of exploitation and oppression is replaced by the government of the people for the

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There is an austere puritanical fanaticism about the regulations which is difficult for an American, inured to doing what he pleases, to comprehend.

Virtually all potential foes of the Communist regime in Bulgaria have been sent to such camps, which means that any person who deviates in the slightest degree from the established Communist norm invites the public prosecutor to get on with incarcerating him. It is difficult to believe that the system is as far-flung and well established as it is; but the Communist authorities themselves have made available a substantial amount of information on its extent. There are at least thirty slave-labor camps in Bulgaria, and it has been estimated that at least 500,000 persons have been confined in them during the seven years of Communist rule. Among the inmates have been whole families—men, women, and children. Before we condemn the Bulgarian Churches for cowardly behavior it may be well to ask what we ourselves might have done in the circumstances.

II

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Rumania was not fully subordinated to the Communist Party until the close of 1947. On the eve of the invasion of the country, which had been the only one to lend full support to the Nazi cause, young King Michael overthrew the Iron Front government and its strong man, General Antonescu, by a *coup d'état*. The new Government, in which a general also served as Premier, accepted the terms of armistice. Nevertheless by March 6, 1945, the Communists were unmistakably in control, although a fellow traveler, Dr. Petru Groza, was selected to head a government in which they had the upper hand. At the Potsdam Conference the United States, Great Britain, and Russia agreed to sign a treaty of peace with Rumania as soon as a government should be formed which was "broadly repre-

the German side as commander of a brigade on the Russian front. He was then a major general and was decorated by the Germans with the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves and promoted to the rank of General of the Army. Before his capture he was often called the 'hero of Stalingrad.' After his capture by the Russians, however, he co-operated well with them. Lascar served as Minister of Armed Forces until replaced by Emil Bodnaras in the next major shake-up on December 24, 1947. Lascar then became Inspector General of the Army and First Deputy Minister of the Armed Forces, a position which he held until the subsequent shake-up in March of 1950.

Of all these turning points perhaps the most important was that of December 1947, the Romanian counterpart of the Prague coup of a month and a half later. In December 1947 Emil Bodnaras took over and at the same time King Michael was forced to abdicate. That was the decisive shift in both the political and military spheres. General Lascar, Bodnaras' predecessor, had been a career officer even if an indoctrinated one. Bodnaras, on the other hand, was a long-time Communist whose military career had ended in disgrace.

Bodnaras was born in the early 1900's in Bucovina. According to the usual story his father was a Ruthenian peasant of Ukrainian background and his mother a German. One of our informants who knew him indicates, however, that that is not so, and it seems that we have here one of the many cases in which interested refugee circles prefer to label current Communist leaders as foreigners rather than admit that their own nationals can be traitors.

In the middle 1920's Bodnaras went to military school and was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1927. From 1927 to 1930 he took an artillery course and in the latter year was promoted to first lieutenant. At the time he became involved in Communist espionage, and when caught fled to Russia. He was tried in absentia for desertion and espionage and sentenced to five years imprisonment. In 1933 h attempted to slip back into Romania, was caught and served the years from 1933 to 1936 in prison. At that time he escaped and again went to live in the U.S.S.R. During World War II Bodnaras was assigned to arty organizational and propaganda activities rather than to fighting the Germans. When the war was over, the Communists placed him as Secretary of State in the office of the Prime Minister, a job concerned with the secret intelligence service. He was in this position until the Soviets decided to take complete control of the army and to communize and develop it.

When Bodnaras took over, he brought in a new group of deputy ministers and changed many commands. The end result of his activities to date is a situation in which Communist party militants control the very top positions but quite a few career officers remain in posts just below them. This result was reached in a zigzag course of three stages.

I. The reorganization in the period from December 1947 to 1950